

REMARKS

1. Information Disclosure Statement

The Office Action mailed March 27, 2007 stated that the previous information disclosure statement was not considered. Applicants resubmitted a similar information disclosure statement citing the same reference on May 2, 2007 and respectfully request that it be considered.

2. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In the Office Action, claims 1-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0087876 to Eskuri. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to enter the clarifying amendments to the claims below that are necessary in view of the Examiner's interpretation of certain limitations stated on Page 3 of the Office Action and discussed directly below.

A. Claims 1-13

Independent claim 1 as amended recites “at least a partial exterior of the coating has a second taper that approximates the first taper of the taper portion.” The Office Action noted that Applicants had asserted that Eskuri does not disclose a coating having an exterior with a taper that approximates a taper of an elongate member. Page 3. The Office Action stated that “[h]owever, the claims as presented do not require the exterior of the coating to be tapered, but to merely include a partial exterior and a second taper.” Page 3. Accordingly, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to clarify that at least a portion of the exterior of the coating is tapered.

Claim 1 also recites “an elongate member comprising a proximal end, a main body having a first uniform diameter, a distal end comprising an elongate tip having a second uniform diameter” and “a coating disposed on the distal end.” The Office Action relies upon

Paras. 0017 and 0018 of Eskuri. However, those portions of Eskuri merely discuss various alterations to a shaft in isolation. The figures of Eskuri all relate to a plurality of balls being disposed within a distal tip. Therefore, Eskuri does not explicitly disclose a coating that is disposed upon an elongate member that has a proximal end, a main body having a first uniform diameter, and a distal end comprising an elongate tip having a second uniform diameter. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection to claim 1 has been overcome. Claims 2-13 depend upon independent claim 1 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

B. Claims 14-20

Independent claim 14 as amended recites a coating having “at least a partial exterior of the coating has a second taper that approximates the first taper of the taper portion.” Claim 14 also recites “an elongate member comprising a proximal end, a main body having a first diameter, a distal end comprising an elongate tip having a first length and a uniform second diameter” and “a coating disposed on the distal end.” For the same reasons as stated with respect to independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection to claim 14 has been overcome. Claims 15-20 depend upon independent claim 14 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

C. Claims 21-25

Independent claim 21 as amended recites “at least a portion of the exterior of the polymer coating has a second taper that approximates the taper of the taper portion.” Claim 21 also recites “an elongate member comprising a proximal end, a main body having a first diameter, a distal end comprising an elongate tip having a uniform second diameter” and “a polymer coating disposed on the distal end.” For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection to claim 21 has been overcome. Claims 22-25 depend upon claim 21 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

D. Claims 26-28

Independent claim 26 as amended recites “at least a portion of the exterior of the coating has a taper that approximates a corresponding taper of the elongate member.” Claim 26 also recites “an elongate member comprising proximal and distal ends, the proximal end having a first outer diameter and the distal end having a uniform second outer diameter” and “a coating disposed on the distal end of the elongate member.” For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection to claim 26 has been overcome. Claims 27-28 depend upon claim 26 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

SUMMARY

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seek allowance thereof. If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the Application but believes that an interview would be helpful to resolve any issues, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned at (312) 321-4277.

Respectfully submitted,

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